

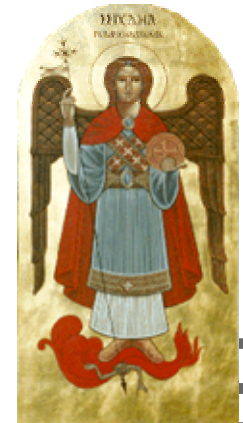
ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
Archangel Michael Church
P.O. BOX 256 Howell, NJ 07731

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MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER



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“**39** And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; **40** And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. **41** And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: **42** And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. **43** And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? **44** For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. **45** And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. **46** And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, **47** And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. **48** For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. **49** For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. **50** And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. **51** He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. **52** He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. **53** He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. **54** He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; **55** As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. **56** And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house. ” (Luk 1: 39-56)

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The committee welcomes your participation in the form of articles, reviews, news or comments. Please mail your articles, comments...etc. to the church or e-mail them to newsletter@archangelmichaelchurch.net

If you would like this newsletter mailed to a friend or would like your name to be deleted from our mailing list, please email your request or fax it to (732) 821-1512.



THE HOLY VIRGIN SAINT MARY

By His Grace Bishop
Serapion

During the month of August, we live a period of fasting, bearing the name of the Holy Virgin, the Mother of Light. We celebrate her feast on August 22nd (Mesori 16th). The Fast of St. Mary, the Feast of the Holy Virgin and talking about the Mother of the Savior are all beloved subjects to the soul. Even

those who are not accustomed to observing all the Church's fasts, observe St. Mary's Fast and may even increase their asceticism during this period. During this fast, the churches, especially the ones bearing the name of the Holy Virgin, are all filled with worshippers during the Divine Liturgies and at the other services which are held almost daily. They thank God and glorify Him Who was incarnate of the Holy Virgin, for our salvation, and that He made His mother a mother for all of us. When He was on the cross, what Christ said to St. John the Beloved, "Behold your mother," is something that applies to all those who follow in St. John's footsteps. Like St. John the Beloved, we also take the Holy Virgin to dwell in our hearts and become a mother, who cares for us and intercedes on our behalf before her Beloved Son.

The intercession of the Virgin, the Mother of Light, is an expression of her motherhood towards us. When we salute the Ever-Virgin, the one full of glory, the Mother of God, and Mother of Christ, we call her, "the saint, and the faithful intercessor of mankind." We call her "the trustworthy saint in front of our Lord Jesus Christ." Our mother the Virgin is a faithful and trustworthy intercessor. With confidence and strong faith, we call unto her saying, "lift up our prayers to your Beloved Son that He may forgive us our sins...Ask the Lord on our behalf to have mercy on our souls... Intercede for us before of Christ." Our confidence in the Holy Virgin, as a faithful and trustworthy intercessor is dependent on two things:

The Honor of the Holy Virgin:

The Holy Virgin received honor above the Cherubim and Seraphim. When we ask her intercession, we also remember her honor and call her, "the saint, full of glory, the Ever-Virgin, the Mother of Christ, the true Queen, the pride of mankind." In the Sunday Theotokia, we pray and say:

"You are more worthy than all the saints to ask on our behalf, O, you full of grace. You are more exalted than the Patriarchs and more honored than the prophets. Your petition is more special than the Cherubim and Seraphim.

For you truly are the pride of our race and the intercessor of our souls.

Intercede on our behalf before our Savior that He may confirm us in the upright faith and grant us forgiveness of our sins so we may win mercy through your intercession." Words fail to express the honor and glory of the Virgin, for she

has heavenly glory and honor above that of the Cherubim and Seraphim. With reverence, mixed with inner joy, let us recall the words prayed in the Sunday Theotokia: "All the high names of the incorporeal creatures, the thousands of angels and archangels, don't reach the greatness of your blessedness, O you, who is surrounded by the glory of the Lord of Hosts. You are more luminous than the sun and brighter than the Cherubim. The Seraphim with six wings flutter joyfully around you." The glory of the angels and archangels, the radiance of the sun and brilliance of the Cherubim all dwindle when compared to the glory of the Virgin, "who is surrounded by the glory of the Lord of Hosts." Therefore, it is no wonder that the Cherubim with six wings flutter joyfully around her. "Your glory, O Mary, is higher than the heaven and you are honored more than the earth and its inhabitants, for truly you are the true path leading to heaven." How can we reach heaven, except through the incarnation of the Only Begotten Son from the Holy Virgin? She is Jacob's ladder, which joins heaven and earth.

The Virgin Full of Glory is our Mother:

We call her "the pride of humanity". She was born similar to all of us, and like every human born of a woman, she was in need of salvation from the bondage to sin and death. Thus, in The Magnificat, she said, "And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." (Luke 1:47) The Virgin Mary, who is surrounded by the glory of the Lord of Hosts, has great glory because of the glory of the Lord of Hosts. It is this glory, which gives her boldness more than the Cherubim and Seraphim, for she is the Queen sitting at the right Hand of the Kings of kings and Lord of lords.

The glorious Holy Virgin, who has this great boldness in front of the Lord of Hosts, knows our sufferings, pains and needs because she is our mother and

a member of our human race. This great boldness, along with her true and deep knowledge of the needs of the human race, makes the Virgin the faithful and trustworthy intercessor of mankind in front of our Creator, Lord, Savior and King, Jesus Christ.

The Virgin, the Mother of Light, intercedes for us in front of her Beloved Son to bestow upon us the forgiveness of our sins. She intercedes that He may show mercy towards us and confirm us in the upright faith.

Our Mother, the Virgin, the faithful advocate and trustworthy intercessor asks for our worldly needs. At the Wedding at Cana of Galilee, she went to her Son on behalf of the party-givers and told Him, "They have no wine." (John 2:3) The intercession of the Virgin is wholesome for she asks for our spiritual, as well as our material needs.

Many souls, like St. Mary of Egypt, were attracted to the life of holiness and righteousness through the intercession of the Virgin. Many, who were ill, needy, suffering or imprisoned, were saved by her intercession. We recall that at the miracle of moving the Mountain of El-Mokatam, her intercession saved the Copts from annihilation during the days of the Fatimid caliph, Al-Moizz Ledeau Allah. We also remember the many miracles that accompanied her apparition at the domes of her church in Zeitoun, Egypt.

On a daily basis, we feel the powerful intercession of the Virgin in our lives, in our pastoral ministry and in serving the needy and suffering. Indeed, those who deny the intercession of the Virgin are poor souls who deprive themselves of her motherhood.

As for us, the unworthy, we rejoice because of our Mother and joyfully say, "You are more worthy than all the saints to ask for us, O you,

who is full of grace." O, Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the faithful intercessor of the human race, intercede for us in front of Christ, Whom you have born, that He may bestow upon us the forgiveness of our sins.
Lift up our prayers to your Beloved Son. Ask the Lord to show mercy towards our souls. Intercede for us in front of our Savior that He may confirm us in the upright faith. Intercede for every sinner that he may repent and return to God.
Intercede for every needy and suffering person that God may fulfill his or her needs. Intercede for every soul walking in darkness that he may see the True Light, to Whom you gave birth ,, and believe in Him.
Intercede for the whole world.
May the intercessions of the Holy Virgin be with us all and may we always be blessed by the care and motherhood of the Mother of Light.

Short Story

Footprints in the Sand...

One night a man had a dream.
He was walking along the beach with the Lord, and across the skies flashed scenes from his life. In each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand.

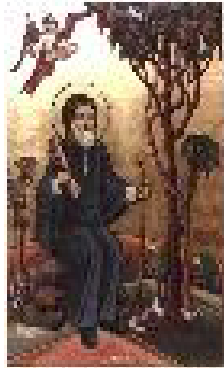
One was his, and the other was the Lord's. When the last scenes of his life appeared before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand, and to his surprise he noticed that many times, along the path of his life, there was only one set of footprints. And these were at the saddest and most troublesome times in his life.

So he asked the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you would walk with me all the way...
But I noticed that during the most troublesome times of my life, there is only one set of footprints in the sand. Why did you leave my side when I needed you the most?"



The Lord answered and said, ***"My precious child, I never left you during your times of trial, Where you see only one set of footprints, that was when I carried you."***

FROM THE WEB SITE OF : THE CHURCH OF VIRGIN MARY AND ST. ATHANASIUS MISSISSAUGA



The Departure of St. Ephraem El-Soriani (The Syrian)

On the 15th day the blessed month of Abib (July 22nd), of the year 379 A.D., the holy father, St. Ephraem (Ephraim) the Syrian, departed. He was born in the city of Nissibis, in the beginning of the fourth century to pagan parents, during the days of the righteous Emperor Constantine. It happened that he met with St. James bishop of Nissibis, who preached to him and taught him the particulars of the Christian Faith. Ephraem believed on his hands. St. James baptized him and Ephraim stayed with him. His worship surpassed that of his contemporaries. He debated the pagans and overcame them by the grace that was within him. When the council of Nicea convened, he attended the council with his teacher, St. James. One day while he was praying, St. Ephraem saw a pillar of light which extended from earth to heaven. He marveled at what he saw and he heard a voice saying to him, "That what you saw is St. Basil, Bishop of Caesaria." St. Ephraem longed to see St. Basil and he went to Caesaria. He entered the church and stood in a corner. He saw St. Basil in priestly vestments embroidered with gold. St. Ephraim doubted the holiness of St. Basil. The Lord showed him a white dove that fluttered over St. Basil's head. God then informed St. Basil of the presence of St. Ephraem. St. Basil called him by name and St. Ephraem marveled at how he knew him. They greeted each other and St. Basil ordained him a deacon.

St. Ephraem increased his asceticism, and many great virtues were manifested through him that surpass description. Among which was that of an honorable woman who was ashamed to confess her sins orally to St. Basil. She wrote on a paper the sins which she had committed since her youth and gave it to St. Basil. When he received it and knew what was written in it, he prayed for her. The piece of paper became blank except for only one great sin. The woman wept, and entreated him to pray for her that God might forgive this sin for her. St. Basil told her, "Go to the wilderness where St. Ephraem is and he will pray for you." The woman went to him and told him what had happened. He said to her, "I am not worthy of this honor, go back to St. Basil for he is a high priest. Go now quickly before he departs from this world." When the woman returned,

she found that St. Basil had departed, and was carried on the heads of the priests. She wept and threw the piece of paper on his coffin. She prayed to God interceding through the saint. Then, she took the piece of paper and found it completely blank.

St. Ephraem had performed many miracles. In his days, Ebn-Disan the Infidel appeared. This father debated with him until he overcame his flawed opinions. He wrote many articles and discourses. When he completed his strife, he departed to the Lord.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

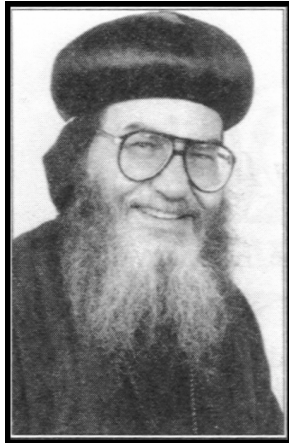


God willing,
**His Holiness Pope
Shenouda III
Pope of Alexandria and
the See of Saint Mark**

will lay the foundation stone of our church on the property located at 7 Church Road, Howell, New Jersey on Misra 16, 1718 AM (August 22, 2002) at 11 AM



The Church congratulate Mounir and Gihan Yacoub for the birth of their son Pierre kyrillos.



Coptic youth ask His Grace Bishop Moussa

“ From the youth Bishopric web site”

Question: *In marriage, is it wrong not to want children?*

His Grace Bishop Moussa

Answers: In the western world generally, this deficiency in giving birth to children is something very negative, that implies that the partners are not willing to give; they only want to give and take between themselves, and at times, in the occurrence of an unexpected pregnancy, the partners may abort, or divorce, or give their child up for adoption. However, within Christian marriage, child bearing is holy. The Lord said, ***“Where two or three are gathered in My name, I will be in the midst of them”*** (Matthew 18:20). The two can signify the parents, and the three, the child

Question: *If a couple are unable to have children, does it mean their marriage is not blessed by God?*

His Grace Bishop Moussa Answers: Not at all. If the Lord has not granted the blessing of child bearing to the couple, it is because He wants them to be parents for many, many spiritual children, such as the orphans.

Question: *What is the church's view on birth control within marriage?*

His Grace Bishop Moussa Answers: The church never stands against birth control within marriage as long as the means of achieving this purpose is not killing the embryo or hurting the partners. The Church permits contraception for the purpose of planning the family, which you will support spiritually, educationally, psychologically, physically, socially and financially.



BIBLE STUDY

The First Epistle of Saint John

By: Christine Michael

In this first epistle, the human nature of arrogance is addressed. The apostle John lectures about the problem of false teachers who had been making haughty claims about information concerning the deity of Christ's nature. He reminds his readers that there were many eyewitness accounts of the apostles. They had seen Jesus Christ as human flesh, saw him live a human life, die on the cross, and he raise himself from the dead. Jesus was truly human and God. John makes it clear in this letter that any false teachings should not be tolerated. He explained how the false teachings lead to immoral living and eternal death, while, in the end, love would bring eternal life.

Historically, the church in Asia Minor was facing problems during the second century AD. The threat of Gnosticism was spreading throughout the Asia Minor area and John wanted to stop the expansion of their beliefs before it corrupted the church. The Gnostic beliefs taught that if God was truly good than He couldn't have created such a material world of corruption. Therefore, they believed that there was a greater god and a lesser god. The lesser god would be of the Old Testament. They further believed that Jesus Christ was God on earth, and came in the human form, but did not endure any pain or suffering as a normal human should from all the beatings and death on the Cross. In addition to that heresy, St. John the apostle addressed another heresy concerning Jesus Christ. In the heresy, the believers taught that Jesus was simply a man who received the spirit of "Christ" at His baptism. Then the Christ departed from Jesus just before His crucifixion and therefore, they conclude that Christ did not suffer and die for humanity's sins, but only showed as if He did.

The main purpose of this letter was to promote fellowship and also to protect his readers from the false doctrine teachers. He wanted his audience to fully understand the true nature of God, which would help them to continue to be unified in one body of Christ. If the Christians could reject the falsehoods of these teachings, they could keep their strong unity of faith and express their love to their fellow believers. St. John the apostle assures his readers of salvation towards the second half of the epistle. He stresses eternal life, knowing God, abiding in faith and theological ideas by expressing direct contrasts such as walking in light or walking in darkness and being children of God or children of the devil. By doing this, John hoped that this would make clear the falsehoods that were around the Christians at that time.

"From The Nelson study Bible: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville"

**Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is
the fruit of thy womb**

(Luk 1:42)

With the grace of God
and your generous
contributions, the
Church has paid the
\$500,000 for the pur-
chase of the land in
full.

Progress Chart

Goal \$500,000

Loans \$68,500

Donated \$428,000

CHURCH SERVICES

Fridays

-7:30 PM-8:30 PM

Hymms Lesson

-8:30PM-10:00PM

Arabic Bible Study

Arabic Prayer Meeting

-8:30PM-11:00PM

Midnight Praises

Midnight Prayers

SATURDAYS

-8:00AM-11:30AM:

Divine Liturgy

-12:00AM-1:00PM:

Sunday School &

Youth group meeting



**His Grace
Bishop
David**

**General bishop,
delegated by His
Holiness Pope
Shenouda III to
oversee the Arch-**

diocese of North America

Celebrated the Divine Liturgy with us on
Saturday June 30, 2002